

## Enrollment booms

Danielle Rancifer  
Reporter

This school year, Illiana's enrollment jumped, greatly surpassing the number of projected students.

During the preparation for the 2021-2022 school year, Illiana's administration projected the number of new students in the incoming freshmen class to be 117, but by the time school started, 146 freshmen had enrolled.

Principal Peter Boonstra wrote in an internal school memo that recent work on vouchers showed that 48% of Illiana students now receive some type of voucher. He concluded that such funding has helped to make a Christian education more affordable to many families and has likely help to increase enrollment.

Former Admissions Director Marie Limback said that positive word of mouth from current families serves as the strongest promoter of growth in enrollment. She added, "Anything positive we do for current students gets out there. [In a way] there are 500 people that help out [when it comes to enrollment]."

Boonstra also credits the en-



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

The freshman class of 146 listens to a message from the chapel committee during orientation.

rollment growth to a number of factors, saying that "we have lots of new families not because of one of [various marketing directives], but because of all of these things."

Beside Illiana creating a pull factor, however, some new stu-

dents may be the result of a push. Both Boonstra and Limback asserted that another factor leading more students to transfer here is the increasing dissatisfaction with public schools. Boonstra said "[The growth] I believe is due to many factors, one being

frustration with public schools and the way they dealt with covid."

Limback added, "Kids weren't thriving in public schools, which encouraged parents to say, 'You know what? I'm done with public schools.'"

## Illiana creates SHIELD groups to foster community

Students meet in small groups to ensure each student is known by name in the community

Kyla Bennett  
Reporter

In an effort to make sure that all students feel plugged into the school community, this fall Illiana initiated SHIELD groups, a new program that places every student into small, student-led groups.

Hosted by two staff members at Illiana, Mrs. VanEssen and Mr. Davids, SHIELD groups are a way to get students to meet each other, become friends, and have mentors. This group is led by a senior or junior, and the groups of roughly twelve include students from every grade level.

The groups are an outgrowth of Illiana's Vision Committee, which has made growing a stronger sense of community among



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Students gather with their SHIELD group on Monday, Sept. 13.

students a priority. SHIELD groups are an attempt to build another place where students can find a sense of belonging.

"Knowing someone's name

is so important," VanEssen said.

The acronym SHIELD stands for selfless, helpful, impactful, encouraging, loving, and daring. Senior leaders under

the guidance of VanEssen brainstormed the name this past summer.

In a chapel at the beginning of this year, Davids introduced SHIELD groups to the student body, and he explained how the story of Madison Derks, a senior at Illiana, who has battled cancer during her junior year, helped inspire the new groups. Last year, a group of friends which widened to include the entire staff and student body rallied around Derks under the name "Team Madison". The goal was to let her know that she wasn't going through her illness alone. With SHIELD groups, Davids explained, everyone can have a support team.

"It is beneficial to meet new people", said Jessica Bales, a senior at Illiana and leader of a SHIELD group.

Every 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, students will meet with their SHIELD groups.

## Student body welcomes freshmen, transfer students

New Viking Night replaces Big Brother/Sister program, receives positive feedback from new students

Lucas VanderWoude  
Reporter

Illiana Christian welcomed freshmen, transfer students, and their parents into the school community on New Viking Night on August 6, 2021.

This event replaced the former "Big Brother/Sister" program at Illiana, which paired freshmen with upperclassmen who checked on them and did activities with them for the first month or two of school.

"We always used to do a little event for new transfer students," said Head of School Lance Davids, "but we wanted our freshmen and any new student to feel more welcomed, as well as their parents."

New Viking Night took place in two different rooms; the freshmen and transfer students gathered in the Arts and Recreation Center, and their parents gathered in the commons where the students eat lunch during the school day. The students sat with their Shield Groups, which were led by seniors. All of the participants had dinner, which was followed by a few presentations about Illiana and a video introducing all of the homeroom teachers to the new students.

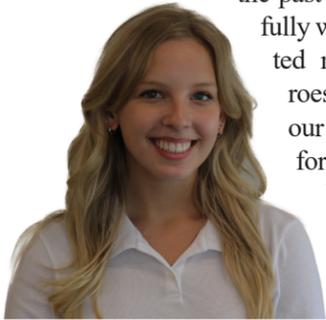
The event received a lot of positive feedback from students. "The Shield Group leaders were fun and welcoming," said Levi Sliemers, a freshman.

"I was a lot more familiar with my teachers because of the video they showed," said Isabella Girolimon, another freshman.

## Remembering heroes of 9/11

When terrorist attacks hit unexpectedly, there isn't much a country can do to control it; the detrimental effects are inevitable, and sometimes the only thing we can do is painstakingly wait until the damage is done.

Our country has been through a lot in the past decades; thankfully we have committed modern-day heroes helping to fight our constant battles for peace in the United States.



Grace Jania  
News Editor

The amount of sacrifice they put into fulfilling their duties is remarkable, and I'm talking

about the firefighters, emergency medical technicians, police officers, and first responders.

We all know the story that this month, 20 years ago, New York City and Washington, D.C. were attacked by al-Qaeda terrorists, along with a plane full of passengers that ended up crashing in Pennsylvania. The number of innocent lives lost was immense, 2,974. Though we students weren't around to witness the terrifying event, the story is still chilling and heartbreaking.

While the world was in shock, however, some took immediate action. Police officers, firefighters, first responders, and EMTs sprang to life, rescuing the injured in the destroyed and burning World Trade Center and those in the demolished Pentagon.

It's so easy to forget what those heroes must have been thinking as they pulled bodies out of the rubble prior to the destruction, bodies of people that were something to someone. It's easy to look past who had to be the rock for the country while everyone was helping to pick up the pieces of the unexpected terror.

These modern-day heroes have stepped up time after time to fulfil their duties to the country and to the people without hesitation. 9/11 was an eye opening day for everyone, even those who weren't around, and everyone who heard the news was affected in some way. Only did some put their fear aside to help others find missing people, tend to wounds (both major and minor), and assist in physically putting the cities back together. Without these people, the country wouldn't be where it is today.

The strength it would take to walk straight into a collapsed and burning building, the bravery it would take to speed to a crime scene in an ambulance, and the courage it would take to operate on an intense wound is something that I will always be amazed by and highly respect. As everyone was trying to get out of the Twin Towers, these fearless first responders were trying to get in.

Our country would definitely not be in the position it is in today without the glue holding it together, our modern-day heroes who sometimes go unsung. But truthfully, these are the kinds of people that our country needs more of, and that we should never take for granted. When an unexpected disaster hits, there isn't much we can do at the time, but we do know that with the foundation of our modern-day heroes and their bravery and sacrifice, we can get through the toughest of battles together.



Illiana Farms's basil growth has taken over the first and second floors of the west stairwell in the academic wing. Photos by Jeff DeVries



## Hydroponics basil growth business flowers

Cameron Evers  
Reporter

Illiana's recently founded Illiana Farms is making huge advancements as the program continues to add new products and sell its crops to local businesses.

The farm recently began selling its freshly grown basil to a local Italian restaurant, Little Italy. An Illiana student began mentioning Illiana's hydroponics program to Little Italy staff and told

them of the benefits of buying the fresh and locally grown basil. Now Illiana supplies the restaurant every week with 12 pounds of basil grown right in Illiana's hallways.

Illiana Farms started two years ago by growing leafy greens and selling them to Illiana families. Now the program has grown immensely and even donates some greens to local food pantries that normally do not get fresh produce.

In the future, Dr. Kui-

pers, one of the founders of Illiana Farms, said, "We are planning to one day be able to have an entire farm dedicated to growing food for food pantries and one dedicated to Illiana's entrepreneurship program."

He added that in the short term the goal is to continue selling produce to Little Italy as well as expand to other restaurants. He believes that this program is not only great for education but also shows great stewardship.

This program also involves an agriculture class in which students can be directly involved in the building, growing, and harvesting of Illiana Farms. Agriculture student, junior Grant VanBaren, said, "I enjoy this class because the work is hands-on."

Another agriculture student, Seth Neumyer, said students are currently working on building more stacks and towers in order to begin planting and harvesting new plants.

## Tech Department drops new changes

Katie Mejan  
Reporter

Illiana's tech department has introduced numerous changes, including more automated systems and expansive storage this year in order to make Illiana run more efficiently in everyday processes, while also cutting their budget nearly in half.

As the new school year started, students and staff discovered numerous changes.

Of all the changes, the universal email address domain change, from illianaweb.org to illianachristian.org, left many students questioning "why?" Dykshorn clarified: "The main thing was I was moving toward single-sign-on across all services...and then I also think from a marketing standpoint 'illianachristian.org' is just more on brand."

A lot more things are automated now, in-

cluding user-account creations. Additionally, moving off of the u-drive to the Microsoft One drive has allowed data to be stored in Microsoft's cloud, which is both free and allows for more expansion. Dykshorn hopes to see the technology become more consistent, manual, and manageable over the next few years.

Another benefit to the school community is Dykshorn's expertise which has saved the

school money by requiring far less use of outside contractors. In the 2020-2021 school year, the tech department was allotted \$120,000 in the school budget; this year that allotment is down to \$65,000.

"We brought a lot more stuff 'in-house,'" Dykshorn explained. "We used to hire out for a lot of stuff, and 'in-house' is what has saved a lot of money for the school."



Bikers participate in Illiana's Challenged to Ride fundraiser on August 21.

Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook Page

## Bikers, disc golfers raise money for Student Services

Citlali Sanchez  
Reporter

To raise funds for student services, Illiana hosted its annual Challenged to Ride on August 21, but this year the event also added a disc golf tournament.

Although it was very hot, 50 riders set out on their bikes to follow routes throughout Lowell, Lake Station, and Sandy Pines. These riders had the choice between riding a 25-miler, 44-miler, or 100-miler, all having SAG stops. Senior Kenny Pickard, who attempted the 100-miler, said that it was cool to see people come together and bike for a good cause. Sophomore Audra Davids, who rode the 44-miler, encouraged people to come next year and ride for fun.

The disc golf tournament, a new event for those who didn't want to bike,

took place the same day on campus. The morning started with a workshop from Mr. Dykstra teaching the participants how to play. Teams varied from friends to grandparents and grandkids. Participants had fun while having a friendly competition.

Junior Addison Bandstra, who played with her grandparents and brother, noted that no practice was required and there was no pressure to play well. Both Mrs. Lagerwey and Mrs. Monroe said they hope that next year more will participate in the disc golf tournament.

The combined event raised \$10,000, and all the funds went to Student Services according to Ms. Cassie Siersma, Director of Development. Student Services works with students of varied abilities, assuring a Christian education is possible for all students.

## Small bumps pose no threat to senior class trip

Hailey Ross  
Arts Editor

Despite the difficulties imposed by a lingering pandemic, the Illiana senior class will take its traditional trip to Washington D.C. from Oct. 20-23.

Because of COVID restrictions, last year's class trip was moved to the spring and involved visiting St. Louis, MO rather than D.C. This senior class is back to visiting the normal destination, though some sites will be different from past trips. For example, the students will be going to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception instead of the National Cathedral, which is only now open on Sundays for worship. A few restaurants may also be different.

Students should still be able to see things like Holocaust Museum, the various memorials, and the Smithsonian Museums.

Even though the trip will have some differences from the traditional one, the students seem to have a positive outlook.

"I'm excited to go and bond with my class because we have all been through a lot and we will get to see a lot of stuff together," said senior Elizabeth Aje a senior.

Senior Taylor Oppenhuis said, "I think that it is cool that we get to see the impact of these things and our country."

Mr. Jeff White, the teacher who organizes the trip, said, "What we show students doesn't make the trip. What makes the trip is the fun-loving attitude of the students."

## Activities, community, mentorship planned for Freshman Retreat

Aubrey Porter  
Feature Editor

On Friday, September 24 the freshmen of Illiana will set out for the first ever Illiana Freshman Retreat at Cedar Lake Ministries for a day full of activities, food, and fellowship.

After being released during homeroom, the freshmen will eat a breakfast provided by the student council. They will set out on their way to Cedar Lake, where they will be broken into 11 groups and will rotate through 11 different stations. Some of

these stations will have activities such as rock climbing, tomahawk throwing, pontoon rides, laser combat, and dodgeball. After the day concludes at 2:25, they will arrive back at school in time for the last period bell.

The idea came about last spring when the Vision Committee unanimously agreed that the need for forming relationships is just as important as academics at Illiana. From there, Mr. Davids started formulating a day where freshmen could take one day away from

schoolwork to interact and work together with their peers.

Mrs. Janna VanEssen said that one of the main purposes of this retreat is for freshmen to get to know other freshmen and for them to mingle outside of their feeder school friends.

"SHIELD group leaders will also have an opportunity to interact with the students that they are mentoring," VanEssen said. "Getting the kids more comfortable is one of our biggest goals."

VanEssen added that she hopes getting the freshmen out of their comfort zone and having chaperones that are fellow students will create a day full of fun that will get the students more connected to Illiana and what it values.

## New Head of School

Jessica Bergfors  
Sports Editor

The new Head of School position has made Mr. Lance Davids the top administrator at Illiana. Davids described the role as a new leadership model to move the school forward.

This position was outlined in the five-year vision plan that Illiana adopted when the school moved to the new campus, and the Head of School model exists at many other schools. The school board offered Davids this opportunity.

Davids said that he and Boonstra work together well and have a great relationship.

With this new position comes new responsibilities. Davids is in charge of the entire school, and Boonstra works under him, completing day-to-day tasks. Davids takes care of fundraisers, spiritual matters, school culture, and community relationships, some tasks that he is already used to doing.

"There is not a day that's the same," Davids said. Some days he goes out for breakfast with people, and meets with them. Other days

he will go to feeder schools and meet with teachers and students, or he will visit churches. Davids still teaches Bible 5 for seniors as well. There is no set schedule, Davids said.

One of Davids's top priorities has been working on some changes to Illiana's culture. He said that he wants all students to feel enfolded in the community, and toward that end the school has instituted SHIELD groups, Bible studies for students, homeroom pizza days, and a freshman retreat.

"I love this place," Davids said. "I've been here my entire adult life. I love kids, and I want to see them thrive."

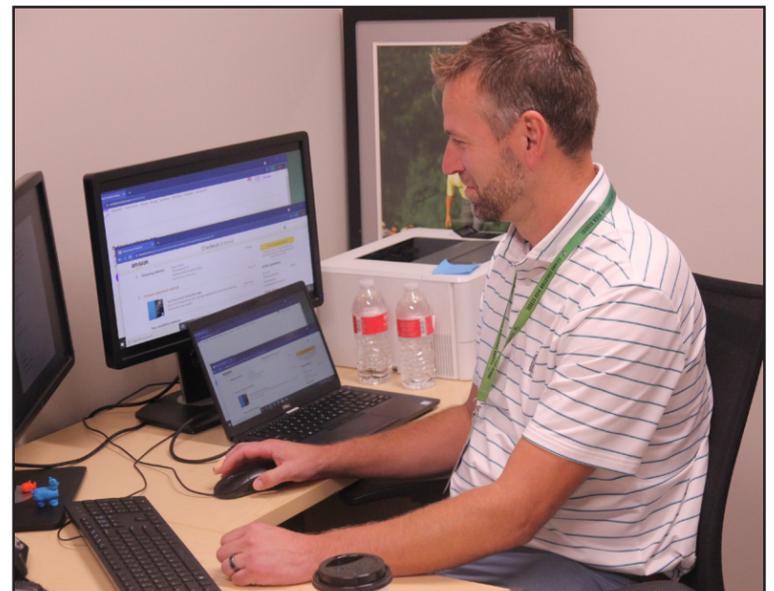


Photo by Jeff DeVries

Lance Davids, the new Head of School, works at his desk.

# Scholarships: about, how-to's, advice, and more

Aubrey Porter

Feature Editor

The season for applying for scholarships is right around the corner for juniors and straight ahead for seniors, and many students aren't sure how to approach it. Throughout the hustle and bustle of college decisions, visits, and applications, scholarships are easily forgotten. However, they are a helpful step in the process. Scholarships can deduct enormous amounts of money from school tuition, decreasing the amount of college debt and also making the college decision easier.

Some ways that students can find scholarships are closer within their reach than they might think. There are

two main ways to attain them. One way to attain scholarships is through the college or university you will attend. After accepting an application, the college will offer the student a grant of money to encourage them to attend their school based on their grades as well as their achievements and involvements in their school that they include.

The second way is completely up to the student. Students can hunt for scholarships from a variety of sources, and only by applying for those scholarships can students possibly receive them.

- **Check Remind:** Mrs Benes will send reminders through text message and email regarding opportunities for scholarships

- **Research on Fast-**

**Web.com:** this site is a useful resource to find scholarships based on interests.

- **Contact parent's corporations/unions:** Many times these places have scholarships that they offer based on the parent's involvement.

- **Look through a school's named scholarships:**

colleges have other scholarships that are available aside from the standard grants that they give to students.

In order to get specialty scholarships though, there are certain requirements that need to be met in order to be chosen. Grades, qualifications,

achievements, essays, and recommendations are all things that colleges look at when deciding to whom they will grant their scholarships.

Even though the process seems big and scary,

the end result is a reward that students will benefit from in their future. Doing as much as possible to prepare for the future right now can eliminate stress and urgency later, so go apply!



Photo courtesy of Douglas High School

## "How can we prepare right now?"

### Juniors

- Do something extracurricular. Work outside of the classroom helps make impressive candidates.

- Get your grades up! Do the best you can in school this year, GPA's heavily affect the amount of money you can receive through scholarships.

- Go on college visits, narrow down your options

- Look into your top school options, research the scholarships they offer, and set goals for yourself to give yourself a better chance of acquiring them.

### Seniors

- Tell your parents to complete the FAFSA form! FAFSA determines how much government and private aid, grants, and scholarships you will receive.

- Keep focusing on your schoolwork; senior year isn't a blowoff year and colleges still look at your senior transcript: Don't forget that!

- Make a decision: apply for the scholarships that you are most interested in

- Don't stress! Even if you don't get any scholarships, college aid is not completely out of the question.

## Scholarship advice from a senior

Olivia Oostema

Editor-in-Chief

### 1. Start early

The earlier you start the college application process, the better. Finding information about programs, deadlines, and scholarships all give you a headstart, which is especially important for students looking to attend colleges with early action deadlines.

Starting as soon as possible also gives you a chance to organize your thoughts on what you want to do, where you want to apply, and what you need to do to apply there. The sooner you answer these questions, the sooner you can fill out general questions, write college essays, and ask for letters of recommendation.

### 2. Make a Google Doc to organize your to do list

When it comes to applying to colleges with varying deadlines, organization is key. Using a Google Doc to record deadlines, list scholarships, brainstorm ideas, and organize essay prompts keeps all of your information in one place and ensures that no deadline passes without your knowing. Additionally, Google Docs can serve as a record of the essays you write, so you can refer back to or recycle them as necessary. One more thing: if you type your essays into a Google Doc, you can use the spell check function to keep your work free of errors.

### 3. Use the Common App, so you don't end up doing unnecessary work

If you're applying to multiple colleges and you don't want to type your address into ten different websites, the Common App is for you. Deciding to use the Common App is a real time saver, especially if you're applying to many colleges or you're uncertain about which colleges you want to apply to. The Common App organizes applications from colleges all over the country into a single site used to apply to multiple colleges at once. And because the website stores your responses, you can add or subtract colleges from your list at any time.

### 4. Get killer letters of recommendation

Believe it or not, letters of recommendation have the potential to make or break your chances of getting into a college. Heed the advice in step one (start early!) to give teachers and coaches the time they need to put together a thoughtful letter.

First, decide which teachers you would like letters from. Choose teachers who make sense, who you've had classes with and who know a little bit about you. Going into science? Ask Mr. Kuipers. Involved in drama? Talk to Mr. DeVries. It's even better if a teacher can cover two aspects of your involvement in their letter. For example, if you play tennis and take math with Mr. Lagerwey, asking him for a letter is ideal. Don't ask a teacher who you had for one semester as a freshman.

Next, approach teach-

ers about letters of recommendation. If you find yourself putting off talking to a teacher, email them in advance asking to meet to talk with them in-person. Whatever you do, do NOT just send the teacher a link to your Common App. Besides being asocial and disrespectful, sending a link before asking impedes teachers from talking to you about your plans and getting a list of activities you're involved with in and outside of school to use in their letters.

Finally, thank teachers for helping you. Remember that they take time out of their schedules to assist you and many other students with letters of recommendation.

### 5. Use resources around you

Parents, teachers, counselors, and older siblings can all be helpful resources when it comes to applying to colleges. Besides suggesting majors and career paths, those around you can support you during this stressful time.

Friends and older siblings can share advice about their college application experiences. Parents can help determine how much you can pay for college and attend college visits with you. Counselors can recommend scholarships. Teachers, as mentioned before, can write excellent letters of recommendation.

As you lean on those around you for assistance, be considerate of the time and effort they put in to help you, and thank them later.

# Covid-19's effect on streaming, cinematic viewing experience

Hailey Ross

Arts Editor

Ever since the Covid pandemic struck last year and led to shutdowns in March of 2020, it seems that movie theaters have never quite bounced back. Instead, they now face a new cinematic competitor, streaming services.

Streaming is the ability to watch any type of media live or recorded on any internet-connected television or mobile device. The most popular streaming sites include, among others, Netflix, Hulu, HBO Max, Amazon Prime, and Peacock. These sites and others all saw subscriber growth during the lockdown. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the global mobile/home entertainment market generated revenue of \$68.8 billion in 2020, a 23 percent jump over 2019. At the same time, the Motion Picture Association reported that U.S. box office returns fell to \$2.2 billion in 2020, an unprecedented 80 percent decline from the previous year.

As theaters have reopened, audiences have been slow to return, but streaming services continue to perform strongly.

Whether it is fear of Covid or the lack of convenience, many people continue to avoid theaters and opt for streaming.

"[Streaming is] pretty much all we do," said senior Dannielle Bonnema. "I can pause the movie. Plus, it's really comfy and I get to be in my pj's."

Even though theaters have more competition there seems to still be a loyal fan base willing to go to the box office

"I like going to the movies so much better," said Rachel VanderZee, a senior. "When I go, I like to be surrounded by other people and join in with everyone's reactions."

"I like going to the movies," said junior Kayla Bosman, "yet the quality of the movie theater experience seems to have gone way down. The popcorn isn't the same and the screens are getting smaller, but [at home] the sheets get more comfy, so that's a plus."

Still, streaming is not a magic cure for everyone.

"It's so hard to find something to watch," said Audrey Yonkman, a junior. "If you don't know what you want to watch, it's like impossible to find anything."



Photo from <https://wallpaperboat.com>



Photo from <https://mycabletv.com>

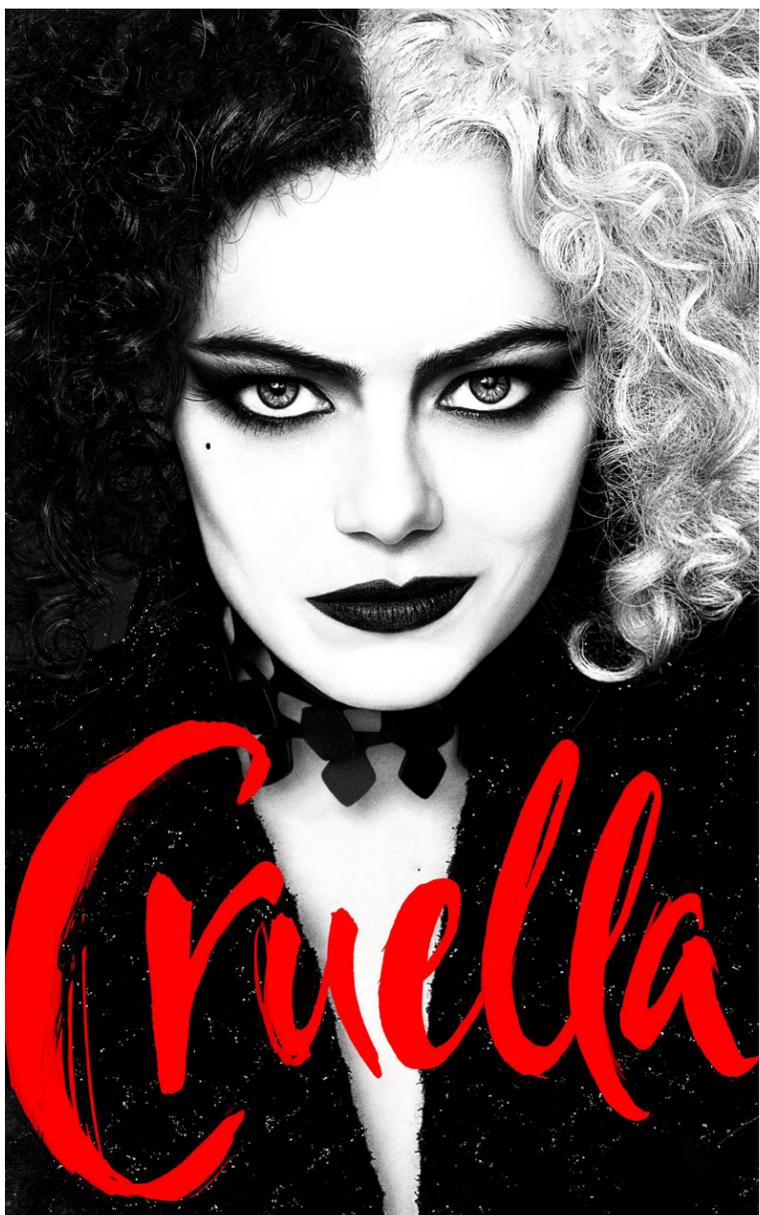


Photo from <https://www.themoviedb.org>

Movie review: Cruella



## Costuming, music, set pieces make villain's backstory fun

Grace Jania

News Editor

"Cruella," a Disney live-action spinoff of the original "101 Dalmatians," hit the theaters in late May of this year and became available to watch for free on Disney+ in late August.

The film was an origin story of the notorious villain Cruella de Vil, and while there were some major plot holes in the movie, Cruella (played by Emma Stone) was executed with thought and grace. The movie was produced by Walt Disney Pictures, along with Andrew Gunn, Kristin

Burr, and Marc Platt.

This film's notable features include a fine wardrobe, settings, actors, and tracklist. I also took note of the actors' impressive English accents, which were pretty consistent over the course of the movie. The costumes also added a bit of flair to each scene, with ragged clothes for a young Cruella and posh outfits for an older, modernized, rebellious Cruella. I also enjoyed the presence of the background music while it filled the silence between lines and scene transitions.

As a part of the teenage category, I did enjoy

this film and its plot. My expectations for this Walt Disney film were set high and "Cruella" did not disappoint. Though the trailers foreshadowed an origin story of the villain, the end of the movie didn't bring you exactly to where "101 Dalmatians" begins. At first I thought of this as a setback, but the plot hole does leave the left-out time in between movies up to the viewer's imagination.

I did like this movie and would recommend it for anyone looking for a spin-off of the classic, or for anyone just wanting to see something new.

# Girls golf program crushes its first season

Olivia Oostema  
Editor-in-Chief

The Illiana girls golf team has worked to build a solid foundation in its inaugural season.

Over the last few years, the athletics department has pushed for an all-girls golf team. Previously, student interest didn't generate the minimum number of athletes required to compete toward the team score. However, this year the all-girls team became a reality.

Coach Suzanne Jonkman said that the team of twelve "came together nicely" over the summer with the help of the team's three assistant coaches: Michelle Bouwer, Jan Lanting, and Jan Sutorius, all of whom play in the same women's golf league.

"Some girls had no experience prior to this season, but

it's hard to tell now with all the work they've put in," said senior Christine DeYoung, a member of the team.

Over the course of the season, the team has improved its putting, chipping, and range skills with the help of Indiana Amateur Senior Golf Championship Leader Terry Werner, who has worked to help the athletes adjust their swing with video technology.

Said Jonkman about the team, "As each week passes, their confidence in their skills is stronger, the love and respect for the game increases, [and] their relationship to their teammates strengthens."

DeYoung said that she joined the team because she loved golf and wanted to use the sport to strengthen her relationship with her grandpa. She said she enjoyed seeing the team "grow in the sport" as a team.



Photo courtesy of Suzanne Jonkman

Senior Katherine VanDrunen makes her approach shot. VanDrunen is a second-generation female golfer in her family. Her mother played varsity golf with the boys team in the 1980s before a girls program existed.

Although the season ends with sectionals on September 17, Jonkman says the players are building a "solid foundation" for the team despite five of the

twelve athletes being seniors.

"I have the deepest admiration for this group of ladies," said Jonkman. "They adventured together in an unknown and are

crushing it. Let's keep this program rolling for future girls!"

The team has a current record of 9-2 and took first place at Griffith/South Central with 245 points.



Photo courtesy of Kylie Martin

Senior Kylie Martin bumps the ball at an Illiana varsity away game. Martin's position is a libero, and she has been playing volleyball since she was eight.

## Martins love for volleyball leads her to PNW

Jessica Bergfors  
Sports Editor

This past July, senior Kylie Martin committed to Purdue Northwest in Hammond, Indiana for volleyball. Her season officially starts in August of 2022, and Martin said she is more than excited.

Martin has been playing volleyball since she was eight, and has played for several teams. Martin's current position is libero, a defensive specialist, and she is playing her fourth year for Illiana's varsity team.

She has also played club volleyball. She played with the Boiler Juniors in Lafayette for a year. Martin has also been playing for Epic

United for eight years and still does when Illiana's season is not in session. That team won Nationals this past summer.

Martin works with her future head coach from Purdue Northwest to improve her game. She has for the past two years. He came to an Illiana game last year, and mainly came to practices this year, she said. COVID changed the way the two communicated, but during the pandemic they spoke via phone and email.

Martin was considering two other colleges, Trinity Christian College and Purdue Lafayette, but decided on Purdue Northwest for multiple reasons. Her

mom attended there for volleyball, playing the position of a setter. Martin is familiar with the campus, and her teammates, and she wanted to stay close to home. Martin isn't completely sure on what will follow college, but she does know that even afterward, she wants to remain active in volleyball.

"If I have any coaching opportunities, I would definitely coach, even here if they needed an assistant," Martin said. Martin always knew she wanted to play at a college level, and is excited to continue her volleyball career.

"That's the thing that comes naturally to me, sports," Martin said.

# Cross country summer retreat may make come-back in years to come

Grace Jania  
News Editor

Three years ago was the last time the boys' and girls' cross country teams went on their summer camp at Camp Tecumseh in Carroll County. The trip lasted from about five to six days each summer, where the boys and girls would participate in a wide range of team-building and fun activities.

While both teams spent a lot of time running and talking about nutrition, they also got to engage in other activities such as swimming, rock climbing, dancing, and getting ice cream with both the boys' and girls' teams.

"It was a good time for the teams to really bond with each other because they were spending the whole week with each other, so they got to know each other really well," said girls' coach, Luke Fennema.

Though none of the girls on this year's cross

country team have gone on one of these trips, it certainly wouldn't be a wasted trip in the future.

Senior Liz Aje, a member of the girls' team, said, "It's upsetting that I couldn't go these past couple years as it is a great team bonding experience... [but] I hope that the team next year will get to go on the retreat and have a good time."

One of the reasons this trip has been cancelled the last few years is because of coaching changes. When Coach Top and former Coach "Pi" stepped down from being the head coaches and Fennema went back to school to start his Master's Program, there were problems concerning who would take the teams to camp and lead them, so the trip was cut.

While the trip hasn't happened in the last two years, there may be hope that next year the awaited summer retreat will have its grand revival.



# Viking sports briefs



## Cheerleading season is off to great start

Hailey Ross

Arts Editor

So far the cheer competition team has had one competition which occurred on Aug. 15 at the state fair in Indianapolis. The team finished in second place.

The girls performed their normal routine that they have been practicing for the actual competition season.

“The team did really well,” said Coach Carissa Beezhold. “We were very happy with our second place finish. [Our girls] learned a lot about each other and

what things need more work.”

The routine had a few hiccups, but Beezhold said that was not surprising because “the week of the state fair was the first time all summer the full team was able to practice together.”

## Boys soccer breaks records

Hailey Ross

Arts Editor

The boys varsity soccer team is undefeated, a remarkable feat.

“Our work rate, hunger and desire to win is unparalleled,” said Coach Todd Bevan. “Everyone is able to contribute in any moment, so it’s made opposing teams really struggle to defend us.”

The team seems on the track to breaking records here at Illiana. Bevan boasted, “Also our defense is on pace to have the best defensive record in school by a landslide.”

“The best thing about the season is the unity amongst the team and the willingness to serve each other on and off the field,” said Bevan.



Photo courtesy of Jill Rozendal  
Senior Alex Bosman dribbles down-field against Hebron on Aug. 31.



Photo by Jeff DeVries  
Seniors Trevor Eenigenburg and Logan Boersma, and sophomore Nolan Bouwman run in the Lake Central Meet on Saturday, Aug. 28.

## Boys cross improves over the season

Aubrey Porter

Feature Editor

The boys cross country team has had a great start to its season. With Friday themed practices, nighttime workouts, a cookout, and hanging out outside of practice, they have been doing things as a team to help improve their bond, and push each other more to do the best they can.

As for their performance, they have all been improving tremendously as runners. Senior Brady Vroom said, “We’ve been glad to compete with the schools we’re facing and we’re looking forward to seeing what we can do when we have our injured players back.”

Vroom leads the team as a top 5 award winner consistently at almost every single meet.

Senior Logan Boersma said that their post season is going to be extremely competitive this year. Illiana beat Lowell High School at the Bearcat Invite by a single point, putting Illiana in one of the 5 schools to get invited to semi-state. Lowell is hungry this year to take their top 5 spot back.

Coach Ramos said, “This team is learning that when we have a lot of character, heart, and determination, we can compete with some of the biggest teams in the area.” Ramos said that their goal is to make a state final appearance and to continue to work hard through the whole season.

## Girls volleyball accomplishes goals this season

Jessica Bergfors

Sports Editor

The girls varsity volleyball team crushed this year’s season with a record of 15-3, and the team has progressed well and bonded throughout the season.

The girls are currently undefeated in their conference at 5-0. Senior Kylie Martin, has surpassed

800 digs for her career, and senior Mia Doom has surpassed 750 kills. Avery Martin, sophomore, has joined Olivia Wegner, senior, being setter.

The team pulls from a variety of classes this year with two freshmen, three sophomores, four juniors, and three seniors. Coach Richelle VanderZee said they have strong and consistent outside hitters in Doom and freshman Alexa Miedema.

VanderZee said that being in first place was one of their goals, and they accomplished it. They hope to win the conference. The girls continue to work on their blocking and defense.

“We continue to stay vocal and encourage each other even if we’re in a slump, and that’s one of my favorite things about the team,” said Wegner.



Photo courtesy of Jill Rozendal  
Junior Faith VanWieren runs in the Lake Central meet on Aug. 28.

## Girls Cross victorious this season

Olivia Oostema

Editor-in-Chief

The girls cross country team, according to Coach Luke Fennema, has enjoyed a “very successful season.”

Fennema said that there were the “signs of a good team” last year, plus new teammates have made significant contributions. With every meet, the team improved or did as well as previously.

The team’s frontrunner, sophomore Avery Olthof, won the Hobart invitational. Both Olthof and junior Alex Vis got individual medals at

every meet except Lake Central.

The Michigan meet on Saturday, in which everyone on Varsity ran a personal record, was the team’s “best success,” said Fennema. “It was great to see improvements and [students] having fun along the way.”

Junior Faith VanWieren said that the team had an especially fun season after last year’s coronavirus restrictions. She said that the team has gotten better at supporting and encouraging one another as well as making inside jokes. “Sometimes we bully each other,” she joked. “It’s tough love.”

“But it’s love all the same,” added Fennema.

## Girls soccer faces challenges this season

Jessica Bergfors

Sports Editor

The girls varsity soccer team has overcome challenges and is constantly improving this season.

With a record of 3-5, the girls have scored 15 goals and have had 4 assists. Reagan Kooy, sophomore, has tailed 40 saves this year in goal. Sam

Bultema and Jaden Poortinga, freshmen, scored their first high school goals.

Coach Erin Behn said that the team is still working on practicing trapping balls out of the air and finishing. Due to injury and illness on the team, the first few weeks were hard, but the team is back on track. They won their first Greater Southshore Conference game against Hebron.

“From the first game until now, the team has grown immensely. I’m impressed with their overall fitness, their willingness to battle, and their ever improving teamwork,” said Behn. “I feel that we are playing more precisely and are making smarter decisions on both offense and defense.”



Photo courtesy of Jill Rozendal  
Junior Taylor Albert goes to kick at the Hebron game; the Vikings won 2-1.

# Editorial

## Remembering to enjoy the little things

The 2018 school year began with the class of 2022 freshmen scampering the halls, trying to navigate through the fascinating new campus. This was all new to them, and frankly, it was for everyone else too. The seniors that strutted alongside them seemed ginormous; some of them even had beards. That time was so far ahead in their life, they had all the time in the world to be irresponsible, make mistakes and goof off in class.

The 2021 school year began with the class of 2022 seniors marching through the halls, greeting their favorite teachers with the inside jokes they had in class, laughing with that one friend they made in sophomore chemistry that they hadn't seen all summer, but still managed to be best friends with. At break they went to the same spot they have sat at for the past four years, sharing snacks with each other, talking about all the fun things that they

will do in their senior year, wondering "Where did all the time go?"

Every day on the first day of school that same question circulates through the halls of Illi-

ana. It felt like it was just yesterday that the class of 2019 was swimming in the retention pond or the class of 2020 was receiving blue passes for blasting Mo Bamba at the school cookout. Who

knows what this year's senior class will bring to Illiana history? Enjoying little things is hard to accomplish sometimes. Students are often told to look at the

have in their life. For others, all they want to do is graduate so they can move on with their lives. No matter the person, there are always little things students can appreciate about the time they have and will spend at Illiana.

Rushing out of the Loud Crowd student section into the commons to grab Chick Fil A and find a seat for Praise Crowd, getting a frozen Jolly Rancher chucked at you in Biology when answering a question right in Mr. Sylvester's review game, or even trying to suppress a laugh as your friend cracks a joke in a class where there is absolutely no talking. All of these are examples of little events that students will remember past their Illiana days, even if they don't remember everything they learned.

Time is valuable, and no matter how much you try to appreciate it and live in the moment, at the end of the day it is going to fly by, so don't waste it.

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bigger picture, to stop focusing on the nitty gritty, and to know that God has a bigger plan. However, dwelling on the here and now is necessary. For some, high school is the most fun they will ever

## Using senior year well

It's my senior year. As an underclassman, it was hard to imagine what such a decisive year in my life would be like. It almost seemed to be something "out there" in a non-existent future. And yet, here we are.

Senior year tends to sneak up on people, catch them by surprise.

One day you're out enjoying summer, and life is peachy.

Then, summer rushes to a close and pushes you into the consuming tide of college applications and scholarship deadlines. At least, that's

what happened to me. Despite college applications, this year has been pretty laid-back after the general craziness of freshman year in a new building, the uncertainties of eLearning during sophomore year, and the hassle of social distancing junior year.

But, despite it all, we've made it to our senior year.

Personally, instead of stressing too much over this paper or that project, I'm spending my senior year focusing on growth-- in my mindset, relationships, and gifts. I'm learning to give myself space to grow into the person that I want to be.

As you may know, I tend to put a lot of pressure on myself to do well in school. So taking a year to slow down, I think, is wiser than cramming my schedule with AP classes. So far, my homework load is slightly less than previous years, but I find that I'm still being challenged.

I'm Editor-in-Chief of the Echo; I'm working on my college applications and visiting colleges; I carry blue-slips during my seventh period (which also helps me get some steps in); I'm reading a lot of books; I'm exploring other interests of mine by being involved in sets running, French club, and a cooking class second semester.

I know that some seniors are sad this is their last year of high school while others are raring to go start their lives. However, whether we view it as a good or bad thing, all of us have one year left at Illiana, and we should use it wisely. For me, that means focusing on growing into who I want to be, whether that means challenging myself to think deeply about the world, encouraging my friends in their aspirations, or improving my writing abilities in my own time. For others, personal growth this year may mean really doubling down on grades or getting work experience at the new Chick-fil-A. Whatever you do, use your senior year well, and set the goal to graduate more prepared for life after Illiana.

A few last words for those who are just ready to get out and grab life by the horns: Instead of going through the year in a constant state of "senioritis" while complaining that you have to be here, make the most of this time. Time is perhaps your most valuable possession, so use it. While you wait for graduation, make memories, learn lessons, meet people, share kindness.

No matter where you are this year, remember to use it well and allow yourself some space to grow.



Olivia Oostema  
Editor-in-Chief



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Front: Aubrey Porter, Jessica Bergfors

The newspaper is a forum for expression; therefore, we encourage feedback or commentary. Please contact us at [illianaecho@gmail.com](mailto:illianaecho@gmail.com)

### the Echo)))

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